

Message Text

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CINCSO

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SUBJ: CONGRESS RECONVENES

CINCSO FOR POLAD

1. SUMMARY: IN TUMULTUOUS FIRST DAY SESSION OF CONGRESS, OPPOSITION POLITICAL FACTIONS CALLED FOR THE IMPEACHMENT OF PRESIDENT BORDABERRY AND OF THE PRESENT AND FORMER FINANCE MINISTERS. TWO SMALL FACTIONS OF THE BLANCO PARTY BROKE FROM BORDABERRY'S "NATIONAL ACCORD", RAISING POSSIBILITY THAT THE BORDABERRY ADMINISTRATION MAY FIND IT DIFFICULT TO RETAIN ITS CONGRESSIONAL MAJORITY. THE GENERAL NATIONAL POLITICAL DISARRAY WAS ALSO EVIDENT AS POLITICIANS DENOUNCED ONE ANOTHER FOR ALLEGED FINANCIAL IRREGULARITIES. PROSPECTS ARE THAT THE IMPEACHMENT DEMAND WILL NOT PROSPER, BUT CONTINUED MUTUAL DENUNCIATIONS BY POLITICIANS WILL FURTHER ERODE WHAT SMALL PUBLIC PRESTIGE REMAINS FOR CXS CIVILIAN POLITICAL LEADERS. END SUMMARY.

2. CONGRESS RECONVENED MARCH 15, AFTER SUMMER HOLIDAY, ON STRIDENT NOTE WITH BLANCO OPPOSITION LEADER WILSON FERREIRA ALDUNATE'S SUPPORTERS IN CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES MOVING FOR THE IMPEACHMENT OF PRESIDENT BORDABERRY, FINANCE MINISTER COHEN
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AND NATIONAL DEPUTY (FORMER FINANCE MINISTER) FORTEZA. ACCUSATION IS THAT EXECUTIVE FALSIFIED GOVERNMENTAL FINANCIAL

STATEMENTS TO AVOID REVELATIONS OF SALE OF GOLD FROM NATION'S RESERVES (SEE MVD 792). DESPITE SUPPORT BY LEFTIST "FRENTE AMPLIO" CONGRESSMEN, FERREIRA'S FACTIONS WERE UNABLE TO MUSTER TWO-THIRD VOTE NECESSARY FOR IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION OF IMPEACHMENT CHARGES. IMPEACHMENT MOTION NOW FORWARDED TO COMMITTEE WHICH IS NOT LIKELY TO CONSIDER IT BEFORE APRIL 3, DAY WHEN CHAMBER MEETS FOR NEXT REGULAR SESSION.

3. ATTACK ON BORDABERRY ADMINISTRATION BY FERREIRA'S SUPPORTERS FOLLOWED A MOTION BY SMALLER HEBER AND ALIANZA FACTIONS OF BLANCO PARTY FOR INTERPELLATION OF MINISTER COHEN REGARDING GOLD SALE. HOWEVER, INTERPELLATION EFFORT FAILED TO RECEIVE NECESSARY MAJORITY VOTE WHEN FERREIRA'S SUPPORTERS VOTED AGAINST IT IN PREFERENCE FOR THEIR OWN IMPEACHMENT MOTION. HEBER DEPUTY LACALLE, SPEAKING FOR HEBER AND ALIANZA FACTIONS, RAISED POSSIBILITY THAT THESE TWO GROUPS (WHICH STEADFASTLY SUPPORTED BORDABERRY DURING 1972 SESSION AS MEMBERS OF THE "NATIONAL ACCORD") MIGHT "EVENTUALLY SUPPORT IMPEACHMENT MOTION".

4. LOWER HOUSE, ON VOTE OF FERREIRA'S SUPPORTERS AND "FRENTE AMPLIO", RE-ELECTED FERREIRA SUPPORTER GUTIERREZ RUIZ AS ITS PRESIDENT FOR THE CURRENT TERM. ELECTION WAS SNUB AT HEBER/ALIANZA FACTIONS WHO FERREIRA'S SUPPORTERS HAD AGREED TO SUPPORT THIS YEAR IN RETURN FOR THEIR SUPPORT LAST YEAR. HEBER AND ALIANZA FACTIONS WERE ALSO DENIED ANY OF FOUR CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES' VICE PRESIDENTIAL SLOTS, LATER GOING TO TWO COLORADO UNR CANDIDATES, ONE COLORADO LIST 15 DEPUTY AND ONE FERREIRA SUPPORTER.

5. INTERIOR MINISTER COL. BOLENTINI ANNOUNCED THAT EXECUTIVE WILL SEND CONGRESS NEXT WEEK DRAFT LAW TO "CONSOLIDATE THE PEACE". DRAFT IS EXECUTIVE'S RECOMMENDATION TO REPLACE CURRENT SUSPENSION OF CERTAIN CIVIL RIGHTS WHICH IS NOW SCHEDULED TO EXPIRE ON MARCH 30 (MVD 514). BOLENTINI NOTED THAT EXECUTIVE WOULD NOT REQUEST THAT DRAFT LAW BE GIVEN "URGENT" CONGRESSIONAL CONSIDERATION, RAISING POSSIBILITY THAT PRESIDENT WILL RESORT TO EXECUTIVE "EMERGENCY SECURITY" DECREES RATHER THAN ALLOW SUSPENSIONS TO EXPIRE. PRESS ALSO SPECULATING THAT PRESIDENT WILL BY DECREE INTERVENE NUMBER OF AUTONOMOUS STATE AGENCIES IN NEAR FUTURE, RATHER THAN ASK FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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URGENT CONGRESSIONAL AUTHORIZATION TO APPOINT NEW DIRECTORS.

6. NUMBER OF POLITICAL FACTIONS, MEANWHILE, CONTINUE TO BE WRACKED BY INTERNAL DISSENT. TWO OF THE COLORADO UNR FACTION'S MONTEVIDEO CITY COUNCILMEN, CURRENTLY UNDER ARREST BECAUSE OF SCANDAL IN COUNCIL, WROTE PUBLIC LETTER DENOUNCING UNR SENATOR RAUMAR JUDE FOR SEEKING TO "COERCE" THEM INTO RESIGNING THEIR POSITIONS. UNR DEPUTY PORRAS LARRALDE BOLTED FACTION

AND IS NOW VOTING WITT BLANCO OPPOSITION. HEBER AND ALIANZA FACTION CONGRESSMEN ALSO FORWARDED SIGNED LETTERS TO NEWS-PAPERS DENOUNCING FORMER FACTION LEADER ALBERTO HEBER FOR HAVING ACTED WITHOUT THEIR AUTHORITY IN COLLECTING FROM GOVERNMENT ONE HUNDRED MILLION PESOS LOAN FOR HIS ELECTORAL EXPENSES IN 1971 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN. HEBER ACKNOWLEDGED TO PRESS THAT HE HAD RECEIVED MORE MONEY THAN HE HAD NEEDED FOR OWN EXPENSES, BUT DECLARED THAT HE HAD INVESTED THIS MONEY AT INTEREST IN ORDER TO EVENTUALLY PAY FOR THE EXPENSES OF ALL HIS FACTION. HE CLAIMED THAT HE WAS REPAYING THE LOAN, ALTHOUGH LOAN TERMS APPARENTLY CALLED FOR REPAYMENT WITHIN SIX MONTHS AFTER THE ELECTION. HEBER ALSO NOTED THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN ALONE AMONG RECIPIENTS OF THE GOVERNMENTAL LOANS TO DEFRAY CAMPAIGN EXPENSES; PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES FERREIRA ALDUNATE, JORGE BATLLE, FLORES MORA, VASCONCELLOS, GENERAL SEREGNI AND PRESIDENT BORDABERRY HAD ALSO RECEIVED SIMILAR HELP. IN SEPARATE LETTER IN TODAY'S PRESS, BLANCO PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE GENERAL MARIO AGUERRONDO ALSO ACKNOWLEDGES RECEIVING LOAN FOR CAMPAIGN EXPENSES, BUT STATES THAT HE HAS NOW REPAID ALL BUT A SMALL PORTION. SUCH LOANS ARE NOT UNUSUAL OR ILLEGAL, BUT IT APPEARS THAT THEIR REPAYMENT BY MOST POLITICAL FACTIONS IS MUCH IN ARREARS.

7. IN CLAMOR OVER GOLD SALE, MILITARY REQUEST TO LIFT CONGRESSIONAL IMMUNITY OF SENATOR AMILCAR VASCONCELLOS APPEARS LARGELY FORGOTTEN. PRESIDENT BORDABERRY HAS APPARENTLY "FILED" AWAY REQUEST, POSSIBLY ON ASSUMPTION THAT VASCONCELLOS (WHO HAS BEEN UNUSUALLY QUIET THIS WEEK) WILL REFRAIN FROM NEW ANTI-MILITARY OUTBURSTS.

8. COMMENT: FIRST DAY SESSION INDICATES THAT EXECUTIVE WILL HAVE ITS HANDS FULL IN SEEKING TO REGAIN ITS MAJORITY IN CONGRESS. SMALL HEBER AND ALIANZA FACTIONS, UNACCEPTABLE TO THEIR FORMER COLLEAGUES IN THE BLANCO PARTY, ALSO NOW APPEAR HOSTILE TO THE EXECUTIVE. RESULT, AS SUGGESTED BY BOLENTINI STATE-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MENT AND POSSIBLY INTERVENTION OF AUTONOMOUS STATE AGENCIES, WILL BE FOR EXECUTIVE TO PLACE LESS IMPORTANCE ON CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT AND TO RESORT MORE TO DECREES. IMPEACHMENT REQUEST WHICH NEEDS ONLY MAJORITY VOTE TO BE FORWARDED TO SENATE, MAY BE PASSED WHEN LOWER HOUSE MEETS AGAIN. BUT THERE APPEARS NO LIKELIHOOD OF TWO-THIRDS VOTE NECESSARY IN SENATE FOR CONVICTION. RATHER, DENUNCIATIONS AGAINST EXECUTIVE TOGETHER WITH INTERNAL DISSENTIONS WITHIN POLITICAL PARTIES APPEAR LIKELY TO FURTHER ERODE SMALL REMAINING PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THEIR POLITICIANS. FEBRUARY GALLUP POLL INDICATED THAT LESS THAN TWO PERCENT URUGUAYANS RETAINED CONFIDENCE IN CIVILIAN POLITICIANS, COMPARED TO FORTY-EIGHT PERCENT WHO EXPRESSED FAITH AND CONFIDENCE IN THE MILITARY.

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